



ARCTOCEPHALUS LOBBATUS.

Linné and Ill. Beckler, Atlas Ich.

Hallmannschel & Walden, Jupp.



# ARCTOCEPHALUS LOBATUS.

## Cowled Seal.

*Otaria cinerea*, Gray in King's Narrat. Australia, vol. ii. p. 413.—Id. in Griff. Anim. Kingd., vol. v. p. 183 (not Péron?), 1827.

*Arctocephalus lobatus*, Gray, Spic. Zool., i. t. (skull).—Bull. Sci. Nat., vol. xvi. p. 113.—J. Brookes's Cat. Mus., p. 37, 1828.—Gray, Zool. of Ereb. and Terror, Mamm., pl. 16, p. 4.—Id. Cat. of Spec. of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., part ii., Seals, p. 44.—Id. Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxvii. p. 110.

*Phoca lobata*, Fisch. Syn., vol. ii. p. 574.

*Otaria Lamairii*, J. Müll. Wieg. Archiv, 1843, p. 334?

*Otaria stelleri*, (Mus. Leyden, 1845) Faun. Japon., t. 21, 22, 23 (animal), t. 22. fig. 3 (skull).

*Otaria jubata*, part, Gray, Cat. of Osteol. Coll. of Brit. Mus., p. 33.

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THERE is perhaps no one group of the Mammals of Australia so little understood as the Seals; hence it is very gratifying when we are able to obtain any reliable information respecting the species that visit the rocky shores of that continent and the adjacent islands. As I did not see many of these animals during my visit to Australia, I must content myself with letting those who have say what they know of the subject, taking care that the animals are correctly figured, and that the passages quoted are correctly applied. I would also remark that the list of synonyms are given on the authority of Dr. Gray's 'List of the Seals contained in the Collection of the British Museum;' and as this gentleman has paid much attention to the Seals of the Southern Ocean, I have no doubt that they may be depended upon.

The specimens spoken of by Mr. Gilbert, in the note from his MSS. given below, as having been procured by him on the Houtmann's Abrolhos, as well as the one which Mr. Angus mentions as killed by Sir George Grey in Rivoli Bay, are all in the British Museum; and it is from these specimens that my figures are taken. There is but little doubt in Dr. Gray's mind that Mr. Gilbert's specimens from the Houtmann's Abrolhos are the female or young of the much larger male shot by Sir George Grey in Rivoli Bay, although the latter is twice the size of the former, being fully ten feet in length and as large in girth as a moderate-sized horse. No great length of time has elapsed since the islands in Bass's Straits and the south coast of Australia were first visited by the sealers; but in that comparatively short interval they have dealt out destruction among these inoffensive animals to such an extent that they are now all but exterminated. Collins (in 1798, when his account of New South Wales was published) mentions that "The rocks towards the sea were covered with Fur-Seals of great beauty, of a species which seemed to approach nearest to that known to naturalists as the Falkland Island's Seal." Few, if any, are now to be seen there.

"In the collection I now send you," says Mr. Gilbert, "you will receive eight Seals, of various sizes, the largest of which is a mature male, though it is not so large, by a third, as the very old ones, of which I saw several, but could not obtain either of them. Among them is a half-grown male and a full-grown female; the others are young animals, and the smallest a suckling.

"This animal is extremely numerous on all the low islands of the Houtmann's Abrolhos, particularly those having sandy beaches; but it does not confine itself to such places, being often found on the ridges of coral and madrepores, over which we found it very painful walking, but over which the Seals often outran us. On many of the islands they have been so seldom (perhaps, indeed, never before) disturbed, that I frequently came upon several females and their young in a group under the shade of the mangroves; and so little were they alarmed, that they allowed me to approach almost within the reach of my gun, when the young would play about the old ones, and bark and growl at us in the most amusing manner; and it was only when we struck at them with clubs that they showed any disposition to attack us, or defend their young. The males, however, would generally attack the men when attempting to escape: but, generally speaking, the animal may be considered harmless; for even after being disturbed they seldom attempt to do more than take to the water as quickly as possible. They differ much in colour, the males being considerably darker than the females."

I am indebted to Mr. G. F. Angus for a drawing of this animal, taken from the specimen killed by Sir George Grey, as mentioned above.

"I send you," says Mr. Angus, "a sketch of the Seal killed by Sir George Grey, while Governor of South Australia, in Rivoli Bay, on the south-east coast of that colony. I was with Sir George when it was shot and afterwards clubbed, and made my sketch, and took its admeasurements on the spot after death."

Dr. Gray states that this species and the *A. Hookeri* "are called Hair-Seals by the sealers because they are destitute of any under fur; but this appears to be the case only with the older specimens, for the young of *A. lobatus* is said to be covered with soft fur, which falls off when the next coat of hair is developed. The under fur is entirely absent in the half-grown *A. lobatus* in the British Museum collection."

The adult has the face, front and sides of the neck, all the under surface, sides, and back dark or blackish brown, passing into dark slaty grey on the extremities of the limbs; the hinder half of the crown, the nape and back of the neck rich deep fawn-colour; eyes black.

In the young a reverse of this colouring occurs, the upper surface being dark, and the face and under surface buff.